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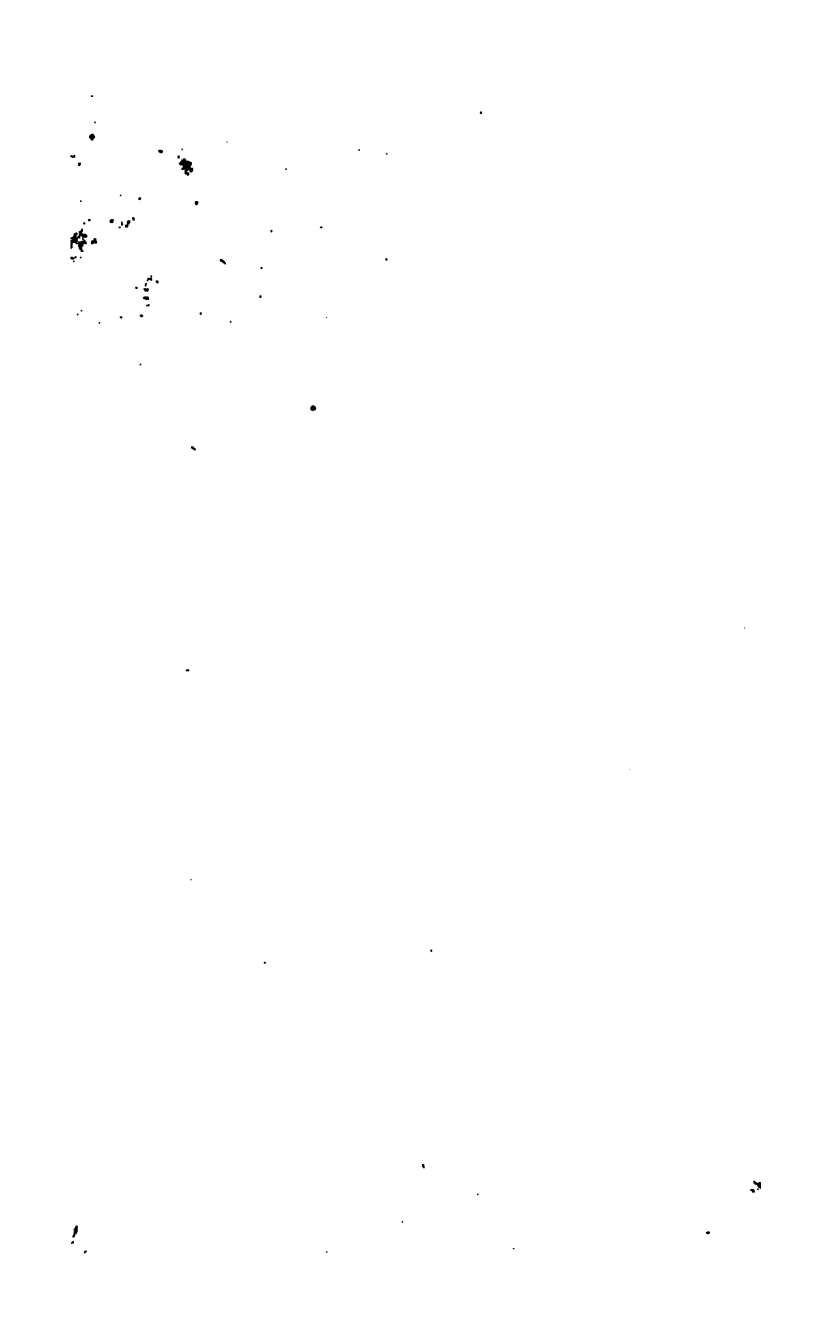
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*A BIRD'S EYE VIEW
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE*

HENRY THUR









A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE.



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE,

FROM THE SEVENTH CENTURY TO
THE PRESENT TIME.

BY

HENRY GREY,

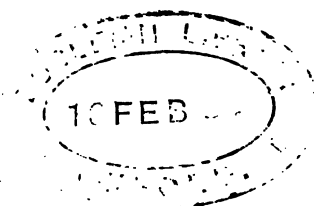
AUTHOR OF 'THE CLASSICS FOR THE MILLION,' 'A KEY TO
THE WAVERLEY NOVELS,' ETC., ETC.

GRIFFITH & FARRAN,
SUCCESSORS TO NEWBERY AND HARRIS,
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P R E F A C E.



IN this age of learning, when an acquaintance with English Literature is insisted on at every educational test and competitive examination, and will, in the coming generation, be as indispensable as a knowledge of spelling and grammar, it is thought that the following Synopsis of the names of our most celebrated poets and prose writers, with the date of their death, their social position, and the titles of their principal works, may prove useful not only to students, but to all who are anxious to acquire a general idea of the gradual expansion of thought

and development of literary talent in the British dominions, since the days when the preaching of St Augustine moderated the warlike propensities, and awakened the intellectual powers of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors.

H. G.

LONDON, *1st October* 1883.





A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE.

*Authors' names,
and date of death.*

*Social position, and short description
of their principal works.*

CAEDMON,
(A.D. 680),

the earliest known Anglo-Saxon whose works are preserved, was a monk at Whitby, and wrote *A Paraphrase*, in verse, from the Bible, selecting the most vivid and picturesque incidents as his themes.

BEDE,
NAMED THE
VENERABLE,
(735),

the father of English learning, spent his life in a monastery at Jarrow, where he obtained great repute as a scholar and teacher. He wrote, in Latin, *A Treatise on the Nature of Things*, and *A Church History of the English Nation*.

ALCUIN,
(804),

was a schoolmaster at York, and, after a journey to Rome, resided for some years at the court of Charlemagne. He was the author of several works in Latin, on theology, history, mathematics, poetry, and rhetoric.

JOANNES SCOTUS
ERIGENA,
(875),

was a native of Ireland, and the greatest philosopher of the dark ages. He wrote a treatise on *Natural Science*, several theological commentaries, and some poetry.

- KING ALFRED THE GREAT,**
'901'. was taught by his mother, and translated the works of several Latin writers for the instruction of his subjects. He is also supposed to have originated the first *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*.
- AELFRIC,**
(1005), a monk, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote *Homilies* on the doctrines of the Anglo-Saxon Church, and made translations from the Old Testament.
- WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY,**
(1143), an Oxford priest, wrote *A History of the Early Kings and Prelates of England*, in Latin, and other works.
- GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH,**
(1154), Bishop of St Asaph, compiled *A History of Britain*, based upon older records and Welsh Legends, which became very popular.

- LAYAMON, a Worcestershire priest, was
(1190), the author of a metrical *History of the Colonisation of Britain*, named *The Brut*, which is valuable as a specimen of the transition from Anglo-Saxon to Early English.
- RANULF Chief Justice to Henry II.,
DE GLANVILE, compiled the earliest *Treatise on the Laws and Customs of England*.
(1190),
- WALTER MAPES, Archdeacon of Oxford, wrote
(1210), *The Poems of Goliath*, a satire on the clergy, *Court Anecdotes*, containing sketches of the manners of his time, and contributions to *The Romances of King Arthur*, whose exploits were sung by the Welsh bards, and became the theme for many medieval and modern poems.

ALEXANDER
OF HALES,
(1245), a friar, was the author of an
exhaustive *Theological Treatise*,
which was adopted in all the
schools of Christendom.

MATTHEW PARIS, a monk of St Alban's, wrote *A*
(1259), *History of the World* from the
Creation, which included a re-
cord of events in his own life-
time, and is considered a very
valuable work.

ROGER BACON, a Franciscan monk, devoted
(1292), himself to chemical, physical,
and mathematical science. His
great work is his *Opus Majus*,
the encyclopædia of the thir-
teenth century. He was also
acquainted with astronomy and
geography, and several ancient
languages.

- ROBERT
OF GLOUCESTER,
(1299), a monk, composed a rhyming
Chronicle of English History,
consisting of more than ten
thousand lines, in the vernacular
language of his time.
- JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, a professor at Oxford, was an
(1308), eminent scholar, and earned the
name of the 'Subtle Doctor.'
He wrote numerous *Commen-
taries* on theological and philo-
sophical questions.
- NICHOLAS TRIVET, a Dominican monk, was the
(1328), author of a well-written and
trustworthy series of *Historical
Annals*, embracing a period of
nearly two centuries.
- ROBERT MANNING, a Lincolnshire monk, was the
(1338), author of a rhyming *Historical
Chronicle* in quaint early En-
glish, evincing considerable
poetical power.

WILLIAM OF OCCAM, (1347), a Franciscan monk, earned great reputation as a scholar and philosopher. He wrote several *Theological Treatises*, and supported the German Emperor in his controversies with the Pope.

WILLIAM LANGLAND, an Oxford scholar, was the author of an allegorical poem, entitled *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, in which he satirises the corruptions of the Church, and depicts various types of human character. The metre is alliterative, several words in each line commencing with the same letter.

RANULF HIGDEN, a Benedictine monk, wrote *A Chronicle*, in Latin, called *Polychronicon*, a translation of which, by Trevisa, was afterwards completed and printed by Caxton.

- SIR JOHN
MANDEVILLE,
(1372), a physician, was the author of one of the earliest known works in English prose, consisting of a narrative of his *Travels in the East*, during a period of thirty-four years.
- JOHN OF FORDUN, a priest at Aberdeen, wrote *A Chronicle of Scotland* from the (1384), time of Noah.
- JOHN WYCLIFFE, Rector of Lutterworth, wrote (1384), treatises against the errors of the Papacy, and made the first complete *English Translation of the Bible*.
- JOHN BARBOUR, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, was (1395), the first Scotch poet who used the English language. He wrote *The Bruce*, a chronicle of the career of the famous King of that name.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER, a courtier, established his fame
(1400), as the first great English poet
by his *Canterbury Tales*, a
vivid picture of society in the
fourteenth century.

JOHN GOWER, a lawyer, exposed the vices of
(1408), all classes in two poems, en-
titled, *The Voice of one Crying*,
and *The Confessions of a Lover*.

JOHN LYDGATE, a Benedictine monk, was a
(1430), scholar and a poet. His three
chief works are *Troy Book*, *The
Story of Thebes*, imitated from
Chaucer, *Falls of Princes*, and
London Lickpenny, a satire.

KING JAMES I. while a prisoner in England,
OF SCOTLAND, composed a poem, entitled *The
(1436), King's Quhair*, in praise of
the lady whom he afterwards
married.

- REGINALD PECOCK, Bishop of Chichester, was one
(1450), of the first advocates for liberty
of thought on un-essential religious doctrines.
- SIR JOHN Chief Justice to Henry VI.,
FORTESCUE, wrote a learned treatise on
(1485), *The Common Law of England.*
- ROBERT HENRYSON, a Scottish poet, was the author
(1495), of *The Testament of Cresseid*,
a metrical translation of *Æsop's Fables*, and some ballads.
- JOHN COLET, Dean of St Paul's, was a zealous
(1519), promoter of the revival of learning, and wrote several theological and classical treatises.
- WILLIAM DUNBAR, of St Andrews University,
(1520), commemorated the marriage
of James IV. in a poem entitled
The Thistle and Rose, and wrote
a satire named *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins.*

- GAWIN DOUGLAS,** Bishop of Dunkeld, produced
(1522), the first English translation of
Virgil's Æneid.
- SIR THOMAS MORE,** Chancellor to Henry VIII.,
(1535), wrote *Utopia*, an imaginary
form of government, in Latin,
and some controversial tracts
in elegant English.
- WILLIAM TYNDALE,** a preacher to the English Fac-
(1536), tory at Antwerp, made *A Trans-
lation of the New Testament*,
and was the author of several
theological treatises.
- SIR THOMAS WYAT,** a courtier, composed *Sonnets*,
(1542), imitated from Italian poetry, in
more polished language than
any previous writers.
- HENRY HOWARD,** wrote elegant *Love Sonnets*, and
EARL OF SURREY, translated part of *The Æneid*
(1547), in blank verse.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| ALEXANDER
BARCLAY,
(1552), | a Benedictine monk, was the translator of <i>The Ship of Fools</i> , a celebrated German satire. |
| JOHN LELAND,
(1552), | Chaplain to Henry VIII., and the first English Antiquary, wrote <i>An Itinerary</i> of his travels, and other works. |
| SIR DAVID
LYNDSAY,
(1555), | a Jacobite courtier, was the author of <i>The Dream</i> , and other satirical poems. |
| HUGH LATIMER,
(1555), | Bishop of Worcester, was celebrated for his quaint <i>Sermons in favour of The Reformation</i> . |
| THOMAS CRANMER,
(1556), | Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote several <i>Controversial Treatises</i> . |
| JOHN BALE,
(1563), | Bishop of Ossory, wrote <i>Miracle Plays</i> , and compiled <i>A Summary of British Authors</i> in Latin. |

- NICHOLAS UDALL, head-master at Eton, composed
(1564), the first English comedy, called
Ralph Roister Doister.
- JOHN HEYWOOD, a courtier, was the author of
(1565), several dramatic *Interludes*,
and a large collection of
Epigrams.
- ROGER ASCHAM, Public Orator at Cambridge,
(1568), wrote a work on education, en-
titled *The Schoolmaster*, and
was celebrated for his Latin
compositions.
- MILES COVERDALE, Bishop of Exeter, took part in
(1568), *A Translation of the Bible*, and
wrote several works against the
Roman Catholic doctrines.
- GEORGE GASCOIGNE, a law student, translated from
(1577), Ariosto the first English prose
comedy, named *The Supposes*.
He was also the author of *Steel
Glas*, and some other satires.

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY, wrote a poem entitled *Arcadia*,
(1586), several sonnets in elegant English, and *The Defence of Poesy*.

JOHN FOXE, an Oxford Fellow, was the
(1587), author of *Moralities* in Latin, and *The Book of Martyrs*, a manual of Protestantism.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOW, a Cambridge graduate, wrote
(1593), *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Doctor Faustus*, and several other sensational plays.

EDMUND SPENSER, a courtier, was the author of a
(1599), celebrated allegorical poem, entitled *The Faerie Queen*, and *A View of Ireland*.

RICHARD HOOKER, Master of the Temple, is known
(1600), for his work on *Ecclesiastical Polity*, defending the Church of England against the dogmatism of the Presbyterians.

- JOHN STOW, a tailor, was the author of a
(1605), popular *Summary of English
Chronicles*, and *A Survey of
London*.
- JOHN LYLY, a courtier, wrote *Euphues, or the
(1606), Anatomy of Wit*, and *Euphues
and his England*, as well as
several plays. He adopted an
affected style which became
fashionable and was called
cuphuism.
- THOMAS SACKVILLE, wrote several poems, and as-
EARL OF DORSET, sisted in the composition of
(1608), the first English tragedy, en-
titled *Ferrex and Porrex*, or
Gorboduc, founded on early
British legends.
- FRANCIS BEAUMONT, were the joint authors of more
(1615), than fifty brilliant and roman-
AND tic comedies and tragedies,
JOHN FLETCHER, passages from which are still
(1625), frequently quoted.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
(1616), commenced life as an actor, and wrote thirty-seven tragedies and comedies, which hold the highest place in English literature, and have obtained an imperishable fame in every civilised country.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH, was the author of *A History of the World*, and several poems.
(1618),

SAMUEL DANIEL, a courtier, composed a poem named *Musophilus*, several odes and sonnets, *A History of England*, and *A Defence of Rhyme*.
(1619),

WILLIAM CAMDEN, head-master of Westminster School, wrote a work of considerable merit in Latin, entitled *Britannia*, giving an account of the British Isles from the earliest ages.
(1623),

THOMAS LODGE, an actor, wrote several dramas,
(1625), and *Rosalinde*, a novel, upon
which Shakespeare founded
his play of 'As You Like It.'

KING JAMES I., was the author of *Basilicon*
(1625), *Doron*, containing advice to
his son and theological argu-
ments, and *A Counterblast to*
Tobacco.

FRANCIS BACON, Lord Chancellor to James I.,
(1626), wrote a series of philosophical
and other treatises of great
merit, under the general title
of *Instauratio Magna*.

REV. SAMUEL compiled, from more than
PURCHAS, thirteen hundred authors, a
(1626), work named *Pilgrimage, or*
the Relations of the World, the
Religions observed in all Ages,
and Places discovered from the
Creation.

- HENRY BRIGGS, a professor at Oxford, was the
(1630), author of a series of Logarithmic Tables, entitled *Trigonometrica Britannica*, and some other valuable mathematical works.
- JOHN DONNE, Dean of St Paul's, wrote *The*
(1631), *Pseudo-Martyr*, and several elegies, satires, and other poems.
- MICHAEL DRAYTON, an Oxford graduate, was the
(1631), author of *Polyolbion*, a metrical guide-book to England and Wales, *The Battle of Agincourt*, and other historical poems, and *Nymphidia*, a fairy tale.
- REV. GEORGE wrote *The Country Parson*,
HERBERT, and some *Sacred Poems*, which
(1632), are still popular.

EDWARD FAIRFAX, son of a baronet, translated
(1632), Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*,
and wrote a treatise on *Demon-*
ology.

SIR EDWARD COKE, Chief Justice to James I., was
(1633), the author of *Reports and*
Institutes, and other valuable
legal works.

GEORGE CHAPMAN, an Oxford graduate, wrote
(1634), *Eastward Ho!* a comedy de-
picting London life, and many
other plays. He also trans-
lated Homer and Hesiod.

RICHARD CORBET, Bishop of Norwich, was the
(1635), author of some ludicrous *Satires*
against the Puritans.

BEN JONSON, was originally an actor; he
(1637), became poet-laureate, and
wrote *Every Man in His*

BEN JONSON, *Humour*, and several other
(1637)— plays, masques, and lyrical
continued. poems, full of vigour and
fancy, but unrefined.

REV. ROBERT BURTON, was the author of a well-known
(1639), work, entitled *The Anatomy of*
Melancholy.

PHILIP MASSINGER, who was educated at Oxford,
(1640), wrote *The Virgin Martyr*, and
other plays, in purer taste than
most of his contemporaries.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND, an Edinburgh graduate, was
(1649), the author of *A History of the*
Five Jameses, and numerous
poems, sonnets, and elegies.

JOHN SELDEN, M.P. for Oxford University,
(1654), wrote *Titles of Honour*, and
other works of great merit on
constitutional and legal ques-
tions.

JOSEPH HALL, Bishop of Exeter, was the author
(1656), of a book of satires, entitled
A Gathering of Rods, and
several theological treatises.

REV. THOMAS wrote *The Worthies of England*,
FULLER, *A Church History*, and some
(1661), other quaint and scholarly
works.

JEREMY TAYLOR, Bishop of Down, was a fluent
(1667), theological writer, the title of
his best works being *Ductor*
Dubitantium, *Holy Living*, and
Holy Dying.

SIR WILLIAM poet-laureate, was the author
DAVENANT, of a tragedy named *Albovine*,
(1668), several masques, and an epic
poem entitled *Gondibert*.

SIR JOHN DENHAM, produced a successful tragedy,
(1668), named *The Sophy*, and *Cooper's*
Hill, a descriptive poem.

- WILLIAM PRYNNE, a Puritan lawyer, wrote *Histrion*
(1669), *Mastrix*, a virulent pamphlet
against the stage, and a number
of political treatises.
- SIR GEORGE was the author of *The Comical*
ETHEREGE, *Revenge, or Love in a Tub*, and
(1670), other amusing comedies.
- JOHN MILTON, the son of a scrivener, attained
(1674), the highest rank as a poet, by
his *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise*
Regained. He was also the
author of several dramatic,
political, theological, and other
works.
- EDWARD HYDE, wrote *A History of the Rebellion*,
EARL OF CLARENDON, which contains some cleverly
(1674), executed descriptive portraits.
- REV. JOHN a celebrated Hebrew scholar,
LIGHTFOOT, compiled *A Harmony of the*
(1675), *Four Gospels*, and other theo-
logical works.

REV. ISAAC BARROW, (1677), was the author of *Lectiones Optica, Lectiones Geometricæ*, and other mathematical and theological treatises.

THOMAS HOBBS, (1679), Secretary to Lord Bacon, wrote several works on *The Science of Government*, in a very republican spirit, and on philosophical questions. He also wrote his life in Latin verse.

SAMUEL BUTLER, (1680), the son of a farmer, was the author of *Hudibras*, a celebrated ludicrous satire against the Puritans, full of wit and learning.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE, (1682), a physician, wrote *Religio Medici*, and other works, in a rich and impressive style which gained him considerable reputation.

IZAACK WALTON, a hosier, is known as the
(1683), author of *The Complete Angler*,
and some biographies.

THOMAS OTWAY, an actor, wrote *Venice Pre-*
(1685), *served*, and several other coarse
but thrilling plays.

GEORGE VILLIERS, was the author of a comedy,
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, entitled *The Rehearsal*, and
(1688), some other plays.

JOHN BUNYAN, a tinker, wrote *The Pilgrim's*
(1688), *Progress*, a religious work,
which has been translated
into a greater number of lan-
guages than any other book
except the Bible.

SIR ROBERT a royalist, was the author of
FILMER, *Patriarcha*, a political essay,
(1688), maintaining the divine right of
kings, and that men were not
born free, but slaves.

RICHARD BAXTER, a Puritan preacher, wrote *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, and many other theological treatises.
(1691),

SIR WILLIAM a diplomatist, wrote a controversial essay on *The Comparative Merits of Ancient and Modern Authors*.
TEMPLE,
(1698),

JOHN DRYDEN, poet-laureate to Charles II., was the author of numerous plays, several controversial and satirical poems, including *Absalom and Ahithophel*, and many other works in verse and prose. He also made translations from *Virgil*, and some of the other Greek and Latin poets. One of his best works is *An Ode to St Cecilia's Day*.
(1700),

SAMUEL PEPYS, Secretary to the Admiralty, kept *A Diary*, which affords
(1703),

SAMUEL PEPYS, amusing information as to the
 (1703)— manners and customs of the
 continued. age in which he lived.

JOHN LOCKE, a country gentleman, wrote
 (1704), *Letters on Toleration, An Essay*
 concerning Human Understand-
 ing, and several treatises on
 civil government, education, and
 other subjects.

JOHN EVELYN, a member of the Royal Society,
 (1706), was the author of *Sylvia*, a
 discourse on forest trees, several
 works on the *Fine Arts*, and
 a *Diary* containing curious
 glimpses of society in the seven-
 teenth century.

GEORGE FARQUHAR, educated at Trinity College,
 (1707), Dublin, became an actor, and
 wrote *The Beaux Stratagem*,
 and other plays.

CHARLES MONTAGUE, composed, jointly with Matthew
EARL OF HALIFAX, Prior, a burlesque poem, en-
(1715), titled *The Country Mouse and
the City Mouse*.

GILBERT BURNET, Bishop of Salisbury, was the
(1715), author of *A History of His
Own Time*, and other works.

REV. THOMAS was a contributor to periodicals,
PARNELL, and the author of a poem
(1717), named *The Hermit*.

SIR SAMUEL GARTH, a physician, wrote a mock-
(1718), heroic poem, entitled *The Dis-
pensary*, and assisted in a trans-
lation of *Ovid*.

NICHOLAS ROWE, poet-laureate to George I., was
(1718), the author of *Jane Shore* and
other plays, a translation of
Lucan, and a collection of
poems.

JOSEPH ADDISON, Secretary of State, was the
(1719), principal contributor to *The Spectator*, and also a dramatist and poet.

MATTHEW PRIOR, a diplomatist, wrote *Henry and*
(1721), *Emma*, and other poems, several *Tales*, and some *Epigrams*.

REV. JOSEPH was the author of an interesting
BINGHAM, work entitled *Antiquities of the*
(1723), *Christian Church*.

REV. JEREMY wrote an essay on the *Immor-*
COLLIER, *ality and Profaneness of the*
(1726), *Stage*, and political pamphlets.

SIR ISAAC immortalised himself as the first
NEWTON, demonstrator of *The Laws of*
(1727), *Gravitation*, and wrote numer-
ous scientific and philosophical
treatises.

WILLIAM CONGREVE, a law student, was the author
(1729), of *The Mourning Bride*, and
several other very successful
plays.

SIR RICHARD STEELE, contributed to three periodicals,
(1729), *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and
The Guardian, and was the
author of several comedies and
political essays.

SIR RICHARD a physician, wrote a poem en-
BLACKMORE, titled *Prince Arthur*, and many
(1729), others on various themes.

DANIEL DEFOE, a merchant, was the first Eng-
(1731), lish novelist, and his *Robinson*
Crusoe is still popular. He was
also a poet and political writer.

JOHN GAY, a courtier, was the author of
(1732), *The Beggar's Opera*, and wrote
several comedies and farces.

JOHN ARBUTHNOT, a physician, wrote a humorous
(1735), *History of John Bull*, and was
joint author with Pope and
Swift of a satirical essay, en-
titled *Martinus Scriblerus*.

THOMAS TICKELL, an Oxford fellow, is celebrated
(1740), for a poem *On the Death of*
Addison.

RICHARD BENTLEY, Master of Trinity College, Cam-
(1742), bridge, was an eminent scholar,
and a critical editor of several
of the *Ancient Classics*.

REV. DANIEL NEAL, a dissenting minister, wrote a
(1743), reliable *History of the Puritans*.

ALEXANDER POPE, the son of a linen-draper, was
(1744), the author of *An Essay on*
Man, *The Dunciad*, and many
other critical and satirical
poems; he also translated
Homer.

JONATHAN SWIFT, Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin,
(1745), was the author of numerous compositions in verse and prose, in almost every style of literature. One of his best known works is *Gulliver's Travels*.

JAMES THOMSON, son of a Presbyterian minister,
(1748), wrote a series of poems called *The Seasons*, and several tragedies.

REV. ISAAC WATTS, a dissenting minister, was the
(1748), author of *The Busy Bee*, *The Sluggard*, and many other hymns for children. He also wrote some theological and philosophical essays.

HENRY ST JOHN, contributed political essays to
VISCOUNT a periodical, entitled *The Crafts-*
BOLINGBROKE, *man*, and wrote several meta-
(1751), physical treatises.

JOSEPH BUTLER, Bishop of Bristol, was the author of *An Analogy of Religion*, and his *Sermons on Moral Philosophy* hold a high place in Church literature.

GEORGE BERKELEY, Bishop of Cloyne, wrote a theological dialogue, entitled *Alciphron*, and several political and metaphysical works.

HENRY FIELDING, a law student, was the author of *Tom Jones*, and other novels of great merit ; he also wrote plays and political pamphlets.

WILLIAM COLLINS, the son of a hatter, was the author of *An Ode to the Passions*, and some other poems.

COLLEY CIBBER, an actor and poet-laureate, wrote *The Careless Husband* and several other plays.

REV. JOHN DYER, was the author of *Grongar Hill*,
(1758), and other descriptive poems.

ALLAN RAMSAY, a bookseller, wrote *The Gentle*
(1758), *Shepherd*, *The Vision*, and a
collection of miscellaneous
poems.

SAMUEL a printer, was the author of
RICHARDSON, *Clarissa Harlowe*, *Sir Charles*
(1761), *Grandison*, and several other
novels.

LADY MARY wrote several poems, and
WORTLEY MONTAGU, described her *Travels in the*
(1762), *East* in a series of letters
which are still read with
pleasure.

REV. CHARLES was the author of *The Rosciad*,
CHURCHILL, a satire on the stage, and
(1765), various other poems.

REV. EDWARD YOUNG,
(1765), was the author of *Night Thoughts*, several satires, and three tragedies.

REV. LAURENCE STERNE,
(1768), wrote two humorous narratives, entitled *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*, and some satires.

JAMES MERRICK,
(1769), fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, was the author of *The Chameleon*, and some theological works.

THOMAS CHATTERTON, the son of a sexton, composed
(1770), *Legendary Histories*, and miscellaneous poems ; he died in his eighteenth year, unequalled by any poet of his age.

MARK AKENSIDE, a physician, wrote *The Pleasures of Imagination*, a poem of much merit.
(1770),

- THOMAS GRAY, a professor at Cambridge, was
(1771), the author of the famous *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, and several odes.
- TOBIAS SMOLLETT, a naval surgeon, wrote *Roderick*
(1771), *Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, and some other satirical novels.
- PHILIP STANHOPE, wrote a series of *Letters to His*
EARL OF CHESTERFIELD, *Son*, full of practical sense and
(1773), useful information.
- OLIVER GOLDSMITH, a medical student, was the
(1774), author of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, several poems, a play entitled *She Stoops to Conquer*, and some historical works.
- DAVID HUME, Under-Secretary of State, com-
(1776), piled *A History of England*, and wrote several political and philosophical treatises.

JOHN ARMSTRONG, a physician, was the author of
(1779), *The Art of Preserving Health*,
one of the finest didactic poems
ever written.

SIR WILLIAM an eminent judge, was the
BLACKSTONE, author of a well-known work,
(1784), entitled *Commentaries on the
Laws of England*.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, the son of a bookseller, com-
(1784), piled a *Dictionary*, and wrote
The Lives of the Poets, a
tragedy, a novel, and essays
on various subjects.

ADAM SMITH, a professor at Glasgow Univer-
(1790), sity, was the author of *The
Wealth of Nations*, a treatise
on political economy.

THOMAS WARTON, poet-laureate, wrote *A History*
(1790), *of English Poetry*, and several
other works.

REV. JOHN WESLEY, was the author of a *Journal*,
(1791), a translation of *The Works of*
Thomas à Kempis, a German
divine, and some theological
treatises.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, a painter, wrote *Discourses on*
(1792), *Painting*, and *Remarks on*
Pictures of the Dutch and
Flemish Schools.

EDWARD GIBBON, the son of a country gentleman,
(1794), devoted many years to a history
of *The Decline and Fall of the*
Roman Empire, which has
been translated into almost
every European language.

JAMES BOSWELL, was a companion of Dr Johnson,
(1795), whose biography he wrote.

JAMES
MACPHERSON, a Scotch schoolmaster, trans-
lated several of the ancient
(1796), Gaelic poems of *Ossian*.

ROBERT BURNS, a Scotch farmer, was the author of *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, *John Anderson my Jo*, *Auld Lang Syne*, and many other sentimental and patriotic songs, as popular now as when they were written.

HORACE WALPOLE, M.P., was the author of a novel entitled *The Castle of Otranto*, *Anecdotes of Painters*, and several other works; he was also celebrated as a letter-writer.

EDMUND BURKE, M.P. for Wendover, wrote *Essays* on various social and political subjects; but his fame rests upon his eloquent speeches in Parliament.

WILLIAM COWPER, a barrister, was the author of *The Task*, several other poems

WILLIAM COWPER, and moral satires, and the
(1800)-- humorous *History of John*
continued. Gilpin.

JAMES BEATTIE, a professor at Aberdeen, wrote
(1803), *Essays on Moral Science*, a
poem entitled *The Minstrel*,
and several other works.

REV. WILLIAM PALEY, was the author of *The Prin-*
(1805), *ciples of Moral and Political*
Philosophy, and *The Evidences*
of Christianity; he was also a
translator of the Classics.

HENRY KIRKE WHITE, of humble origin, wrote *Miscel-*
(1806), *laneous Poems* of considerable
merit.

RICHARD PORSON, a professor at Cambridge, was
(1808), an eminent Greek scholar and
critic, and edited four plays of
Euripides.

REV. JOHN HOME, a Scotch minister, was the
(1808), author of a clever tragedy,
named *Douglas*, for writing
which he was expelled by the
elders of his kirk.

CHARLES DIBDIN, a musician, wrote *Poor Jack*,
(1814), and many other favourite bal-
lads and sea songs.

JANE AUSTEN, a clergyman's daughter, was
(1817), the authoress of *Pride and Pre-
judice*, *Sense and Sensibility*,
and several other popular do-
mestic novels.

RICHARD BRINSLEY Under-Secretary of State, wrote
SHERIDAN, three of the wittiest farces in
(1817), the English language, entitled
The Rivals, *The School for
Scandal*, and *The Critic*; and
made some brilliant speeches in
Parliament.

SIR PHILIP FRANCIS, was the reputed author of a
(1818), series of pungent political letters
signed *Junius*.

JOHN KEATS, a medical student, wrote an *Ode*
(1821), *to a Nightingale, Endymion*, and
many other elegant poems.

PERCY BYSSHE eldest son of a baronet, was a
SHELLEY, gifted writer with extreme re-
(1822), volutionary ideas. His best
poetical works are *Prometheus*
Unbound, and *Cenci*; he was
also the author of several
romances, and translations
from the Greek Classics.

ANN RADCLIFFE, wife of a journalist, wrote *The*
(1823), *Romance of the Forest, The*
Mysteries of Udolpho, and se-
veral other thrilling novels.

THOMAS ERSKINE, Lord Chancellor to George III.,
(1823), was the author of several politi-
cal pamphlets.

- MRS BARBAULD, was a well-known writer of
(1824), *Poems and Hymns for Children.*
- LORD BYRON, was a poet of extraordinary
(1824), genius, power, and versatility ;
his most popular works being
Childe Harold and *Don Juan.*
- REGINALD HEBER, Bishop of Calcutta, was the
(1826), author of a favourite collection
of *Hymns* and *Sacred Poems.*
- WILLIAM GIFFORD, of humble origin, became editor
(1826), of *The Quarterly Review*, and
wrote successful satires against
the Italian style of poetry and
the modern drama.
- WILLIAM MITFORD, M.P., devoted many years to a
(1827), *History of Greece.*
- GEORGE CANNING, Prime Minister, contributed in
(1827), his earlier days to the *Anti-*
Jacobin, a satirical periodical.

REV. DR LANIGAN, was the author of a calm and
(1828), learned *Ecclesiastical History*
of Ireland.

SIR HUMPHREY President of the Royal Society,
DAVY, wrote numerous treatises on
(1829), *Physical Science and Chemi-
cal Philosophy*.

THOMAS HOPE, an architect, was the author of
(1831), *The Memoirs of a Modern
Greek*, and a work on *House-
hold Furniture*.

REV. GEORGE CRABBE, wrote *Tales of the Hall*, and
(1832), other narrative poems.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, was the prince of novelists, and
(1832), the author of numerous ro-
mantic poems ; he also contri-
buted to the *Edinburgh* and
Quarterly Reviews.

JEREMY BENTHAM, a barrister, wrote *The Principles of Morals and Legislation*,
(1832), and other utilitarian treatises.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, the son of a clergyman, became a poet, a critic, and a metaphysician; his best works being *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Aids to Reflection*.
(1834),

CHARLES LAMB, a clerk in the India Office, was the author of *Essays of Elia*, a clever series of humorous sketches, and *Tales from Shakespeare*.
(1834),

MRS HEMANS, wrote *Lays of Many Lands*, *Songs of the Affections*, and various miscellaneous poems.
(1835),

- JAMES HOGG, known as the Ettrick Shepherd
(1835), was the author of several collections of songs and ballads, of which the finest are *The Queen's Wake* and *The Skylark*.
- WILLIAM COBBETT, a self-educated farmer, was the
(1835), editor of *The Weekly Register* a domestic journal, and the author of some educational and political publications.
- JAMES MILL, was educated for the Scotch
(1836), Kirk, but preferred literature. He wrote a *History of British India*, and several works on political economy and philosophical subjects.
- L. E. LANDON, contributed poetry to several
(MRS M'LEAN) periodicals. She also wrote
(1839) *The Fate of Adelaide*, a Swiss tale, and three novels.

FANNY BURNEY, waiting woman to Queen Charlotte, wrote *Evelina* and two other clever novels. She has also recorded her experience at Court in her *Diary* and *Letters*.
MADAME D'ARBLAY, (1840),

THEODORE HOOK, an Oxford graduate, could improvise on any subject, and was the author of *Maxwell* and other novels, besides numerous satirical and humorous essays and sketches.
(1841),

ALLAN of humble origin, wrote novels, poems, a drama, biographies, and numerous Scottish songs and ballads.
CUNNINGHAM, (1842),

REV. THOMAS head master of Rugby School, wrote a *History of Rome*, and *Lectures on Modern History*.
ARNOLD, (1842),

ROBERT SOUTHEY, poet-laureate, was the author of
(1843), *Thalaba, The Curse of Kehama, The Doctor*, and other poems, some translations from Spanish and Portuguese writers, and several biographies; he also contributed to the *Quarterly Review*.

THOMAS CAMPBELL, son of a merchant, established
(1844), his fame as a poet by his *Pleasures of Hope*, and wrote several other poems of considerable merit.

THOMAS HOOD, son of a bookseller, wrote *The Bridge of Sighs, The Song of a Shirt*, and many other pathetic and humorous poems; he also contributed to several magazines.

REV. RICHARD
BARHAM,
(1845), was the author of *The Ingoldsby
Legends*, a series of humorous
tales in verse.


LADY NAIRNE,
(1845), was the authoress of *Caller
Herrin'*, *The Laird of Cockpen*,
Lays from Strathearne, and
other popular lyrical poetry.

ISAAC D'ISRAELI,
(1848), son of a retired merchant,
wrote *The Curiosities of Literature*,
and other works on the
same subject.

COUNTESS OF
BLESSINGTON,
(1849), wrote her *Conversations with
Byron*, and several novels,
travels, sketches, and memoirs.

MARIA EDGEWORTH, the daughter of a mechanical
(1849), engineer, was the authoress of
Belinda, and many other ad-
mirable tales of Irish life.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE, an Oxford scholar, contributed
(1849), to *Blackwood* and other maga-



HARTLEY COLERIDGE, zines ; he also wrote *The Lives*
(1849)— *of Northern Worthies*, and *The*
continued. *Life of Massinger*, a dramatist.

CAPTAIN MARRYAT, R.N., wrote *Midshipman Easy*,
(1849), *Peter Simple*, *Jacob Faithful*,
and many other naval novels.

WILLIAM poet-laureate, was the author of
WORDSWORTH, *The Excursion*, and numerous
(1850), other poems of great beauty.

LORD JEFFREY, a Scotch judge, commenced
(1850), life as a journalist, and wrote
several clever critical essays.

JOANNA BAILLIE, the daughter of a Presbyterian
(1851), minister, wrote a series of *Plays*
on the Passions, and some mis-
cellaneous poetry.

DR JOHN LINGARD, of humble origin, wrote a lucid
(1851), and impartial *History of Eng-*
land, and some theological
treatises.

- THOMAS MOORE, educated for the law, was the
(1852), author of *Irish Melodies*, *Lalla Rookh*, and many other poems.
- JAMES MONTGOMERY, of humble origin, wrote *The*
(1854), *Wanderer in Switzerland*, *The Grave*, and other descriptive and miscellaneous poetry.
- SAMUEL ROGERS, a banker, wrote *The Pleasures*
(1855), *of Memory*, and other poems.
- CHARLOTTE BRONTE, a clergyman's daughter, wrote
(CURREN BELL) *Jane Eyre*, a work of great
(1855), genius, and several other novels.
- SIR WILLIAM a celebrated Scotch meta-
HAMILTON, physician, contributed to the
(1856), *Edinburgh Review*, and wrote treatises on logic and mental philosophy.

DOUGLAS JERROLD, the son of a theatrical manager,
(1857), was the author of *Black-eyed Susan*, and other plays, *Mrs Caudle's Lectures*, and numerous other sparkling and satirical compositions. He was also a journalist.

HENRY HALLAM, an Oxford graduate, was the
(1859), author of a *Constitutional History of England*, and an *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, both of which evince great industry, acuteness, and impartiality.

LORD MACAULAY, wrote *The Lays of Ancient Rome*, a *History of England*,
(1859), and numerous other poems and essays. He also contributed to several periodicals, and for brilliancy of style and elegant diction, holds the highest rank among English writers.


THOMAS DE QUINCY, (1859), the son of a merchant, was the author of *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, and an impassioned and critical writer in several periodicals.

J. H. LEIGH HUNT, (1859), the son of a solicitor, was a journalist, poet, and essayist. He is best known as the editor of the *London Journal*.

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM NAPIER, (1860), wrote a *History of the Peninsular War*, and other works on India.

G. P. R. JAMES, (1860), was the author of *Richlieu, De Lorne*, and many other historical romances.

LORD CAMPBELL, (1861), Lord Chancellor, was the author of a series of *The Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, and another of *The Chief Justices*.



MRS BROWNING, was the highly-educated and
(1861), talented authoress of *Seraphim*,
Aurora Leigh, and several other
lyrical poems.

SIR FRANCIS wrote *The Merchant and the*
PALGRAVE, *Friar*, and other works, evinc-
(1861), ing antiquarian and medieval
knowledge and research.

J. SHERIDAN KNOWLES, an actor, produced *The Hunch-*
(1862), *back*, *Love Chase*, and some
other plays.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE the son of an Indian civil ser-
THACKERAY, vant, contributed to *Punch* and
(1863), several magazines, and earned
great reputation as the author
of *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, and
several other novels.

MRS TROLLOPE, was the authoress of *Travels in*
(1863), *America*, and numerous novels.

RICHARD WHATELY, Archbishop of Dublin, wrote
(1863), several valuable works on *Logic*
and *Rhetoric*.

SIR GEORGE CORNEWALL LEWIS, a statesman, was the author of
(1863), numerous essays on science,
history, and philosophy. He
also conducted the *Edinburgh*
Review.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, having squandered his estate,
(1864), became an author, and wrote
Imaginary Conversations, which
are full of scholarship and
humour, as well as poems and
essays.

CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE, a civil servant, became a well-
(1864), known critic and journalist, and
wrote essays on literary history.

REV. JOHN KEBLE, was the author of *The Christian*
(1865), *Year*, and several theological
works.

- MRS GASKELL, the wife of a Unitarian minister,
(1865), wrote *Mary Barton*, and other novels depicting artisan life.
- WILLIAM AYTOUN, a graduate of Edinburgh, was
(1865), the author of *The Execution of Montrose*, and several other national lays and ballads.
- REV. WILLIAM was an eminent writer on mathe-
WHEWELL, matics, science, philosophy, and
(1866), other subjects.
- SIR ARCHIBALD devoted many years to the com-
ALISON, pilation of *A History of Europe*,
(1867), which has a world-wide popularity.
- MICHAEL FARADAY, of humble origin, attained great
(1867), eminence as a lecturer and writer on *Chemistry* and *Electricity*.

HENRY BROUGHAM, Lord Chancellor, achieved a great reputation as an orator, and was the author of *Lives of Men of Letters*, and several works on theology, metaphysics, and science.

SAMUEL LOVER, originally a miniature painter, was a celebrated Irish novelist and song writer. *Handy Andy*, *Rory O'More*, and *Molly Bawn*, are some of his best compositions.

SIR DAVID BREWSTER, devoted his life to science, and wrote numerous treatises on *Light* and *Optics*.

HENRY HART MILMAN, Dean of St Paul's, was the author of *Fazio*, a tragedy, *The Fall of Jerusalem*, and many historical and theological works.

WILLIAM CARLETON, of humble origin, wrote *Traits* (1869), and *Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, and other humorous and pathetic tales.

CHARLES DICKENS, the son of a civil servant, was (1870), the author of *The Pickwick Papers*, and a series of popular novels, chiefly delineating the life of the masses.

SIR JOHN HERSCHEL, wrote many treatises on *Astronomy*, and other scientific subjects.

SIR RODERICK MURCHISON, was President of the Geographical Society, and the author of several works on *Geology*.

GEORGE GROTE, a banker, wrote a most valuable *History of Greece*, and a number of political pamphlets.

- AUGUSTUS DE MORGAN,
(1871), an Oxford wrangler, devoted himself to mathematics, and was the author of a *Treatise on the Differential Calculus*. He also published an amusing *Budget of Paradoxes*.
- HENRY ALFORD,
(1871), Dean of Canterbury, wrote *The School of the Heart*, and other poems, and was an eminent Greek scholar.
- REV. FREDERICK DENNISON MAURICE,
(1872), the son of a Unitarian minister, was the author of *Mental and Moral Philosophy*, and several theological treatises inculcating Broad Church doctrines.
- CHARLES JAMES LEVER,
(1872), a physician, wrote *Harry Lorrequer*, *Charles O'Malley*, *Jack Hinton*, and many other brilliantly humorous Irish novels.

MRS SOMERVILLE, was the authoress of *The Connexion of the Physical Sciences*,
(1872), *Physical Geography*, and other popular scientific works.

CHARLES KNIGHT, the son of a bookseller, was
(1873), a Shakespearian commentator, and the publisher of a variety of cheap and instructive literature.

JOHN STUART MILL, M.P., was the author of numerous works on *Political Economy*,
(1873), with a strong democratic and agnostic bias.

LORD LYTTON, was a richly gifted and versatile
(1873), writer of plays, romances and novels. *The Lady of Lyons* and *Money* are his best dramas, and *The Last Days of Pompeii* and *Eugene Aram* his most popular fictions.

- CHARLES SHIRLEY the son of an architect, was a
BROOKS, journalist and play-writer, but
(1874), is best known as a contributor
 to *Punch*.
- BRYAN WALLER educated for the law, wrote a
PROCTER, number of miscellaneous poems,
(BARRY CORNWALL) and several biographies.
(1874),
- HON. MRS NORTON, was a sentimental ballad-writer,
(LADY STIRLING and the authoress of *Stuart of*
MAXWELL.) *Dunleath, Lost and Saved*, and
(1875), other novels.
- SIR CHARLES LYELL, was the author of several
(1875), valuable works on *Geology*.
- REV. CHARLES was author of *Alton Locke*,
KINGSLEY, *Yeast*, *Hypatia*, and other
(1875), novels, evincing strong sym-
 pathy with the working classes.
- LORD MAHON, wrote *A History of England*,
(EARL STANHOPE). and *A Life of Belisarius*.
(1875),

JOHN FORSTER, a barrister, was an eminent
(1876), journalist, and the biographer
of Swift, Dickens, and other
men of note.

HARRIET descended from a Huguenot
MARTINEAU, family, was the authoress of
(1876), *Illustrations of Political Eco-*
nomy, some *Historical Works*
and *Travels*, and biographical
notices.

SAMUEL WARREN, a barrister, wrote *The Diary*
(1877), *of a Late Physician, Ten Thou-*
sand a Year, and some other
sensational novels.

WILLIAM HEPWORTH a barrister, was the author of
DIXON, *New America, Free Russia, The*
(1879), *Switzers*, and other historical
and biographical works.

GEORGE ELIOT, was the authoress of *Adam Bede*,
(MARIA EVANS) *Silas Marner*, *Middlemarch*,
(1880), *Daniel Deronda*, and other
novels, evincing rare genius and
knowledge of human nature.

TOM TAYLOR, a civil servant, wrote *The Ticket*
(1880), *of Leave* and other popular plays.

THOMAS CARLYLE, the son of a Scotch farmer, was
(1881), a stern censor of the age he
lived in, a contributor to several
magazines, and the author of
Sartor Resartus, and several his-
torical and philosophical works.

BENJAMIN D'ISRAELI, commenced his success as a
EARL OF novelist with *Vivian Grey*, and
BEACONSFIELD, crowned it with *Endymion*.
(1881),

JOHN HILL BURTON, a barrister, wrote *A History*
(1881), *of Scotland*, and on political
economy.

ARTHUR PENRHYN Dean of Westminster, was the
 STANLEY, author of *Travels in Palestine*,
 (1881), the *Life of Dr Arnold*, and
 other works.

WILLIAM HARRISON a journalist, wrote *Jack Shep-*
 AINSWORTH, *pard, The Tower of London*, and
 (1882), some other popular but pernicious novels.

CHARLES DARWIN, a graduate of Cambridge, be-
 (1882), came famous as a naturalist and
 physiologist, and was the author
 of *The Origin of the Species*,
 The Descent of Man, and several
 scientific works.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE, a civil servant, will be remem-
 (1883), bered as the author of *Dr*
 Thorne, Framley Parsonage,
 Barchester Towers, and many
 other amusing novels, and
 books of travel.

ROBERT AND WILLIAM the sons of a Scotch weaver,
CHAMBERS, were the eminent publishers of
(1871, 1883), the *Edinburgh Journal*, and the
authors of a very complete *History of English Literature*, and
many educational works of great
merit, and having an immense
circulation.

JOHN WILLIAM Bishop of Natal, was the author
COLENSO, of some useful *Mathematical*
(1883), works, and of *Commentaries on*
The Pentateuch and Book of
Joshua, of great ability but
questionable orthodoxy.

WILLIAM an Oxford scholar, and printer
SPOTTISWOODE, to the Queen, wrote a treatise
(1883), on the *Polarisation of Light*,
and various works on philo-
sophy, astronomy, popular edu-
cation, and other subjects.


HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, (1882), No record of writers in the English language would be complete which did not include the author of *Hyperion*, *Kavanagh*, *The Song of Hiawatha*, and many other poems, which are held in as high estimation by English readers as by his own countrymen in America, and breathe a spirit of love and purity unsurpassed in the literature of any other nation, either ancient or modern.

THE traveller who gazes, from an eminence, on the bird's-eye view which it affords of a newly-visited city or locality, is glad to have his attention directed to the principal objects of interest in the somewhat confusing expanse around him ; and readers of the foregoing Synopsis will probably be better able to retain its impression on their mental vision with the aid of a

few general observations on on some of the chie points, concerning which it at once creates a desire for further information.

The gift of language enabled mankind, from the earliest ages, to communicate their thoughts and ideas to each other; and, long before the invention of writing, songs were composed by the bards or priests, to be recited at their religious ceremonies, or to kindle courage in battle, which were orally handed down from generation to generation, and formed the main source of all subsequent historical records and other literature.

It must also be remembered, in connection with the rise and progress of English learning, that, for centuries prior to the Christian era, intellectual culture had attained its highest development in ancient Greece and Rome, and that from the writings of the celebrated authors of those days, whose works were almost miraculously preserved during the dark ages which followed the downfall of the Roman Empire, all that is most valuable in our secular knowledge and litera-



ture, except a fuller acquaintance with the laws of nature, has been derived.

The Angles are supposed to have brought with them to Britain, in the fifth century, a composition in praise of the deeds of their ancestors, called 'The Gleeman's Song,' which, with two others, entitled 'The Battle of Finsburgh' and 'The Tale of Beowulf,' were afterwards committed to writing, and constitute the only specimens of their language and poetry.

Caedmon was a native of Britain, and therefore heads the roll of Anglo-Saxon writers. Bede, and several of his successors, wrote in Latin, because that language was adopted by the monks as better suited than the rude vernacular for literary purposes. King Alfred, however, endeavoured to instruct his people by means of translations, but his example does not seem to have been followed, the writers during the next two centuries having chiefly devoted themselves to historical annals and controversial theology. The earliest dawn of romance was the engrafting into their works, by Mapes and others, of the Welsh legends, relat-

ing to King Arthur. The first work on English law appeared soon afterwards, and Roger Bacon's treatises on science and general knowledge. Satire and criticism followed next, and the Anglo-Saxon language, which was gradually changing into Norman-English, began to be used more generally than Latin.

During the fourteenth century vice and misery were depicted in allegorical poetry, and the spirit of inquiry was stimulated by travels and philosophical disquisitions. Wycliffe's translation of the Bible helped, at the same time, to enforce the doctrines of the religious reformers, and Chaucer's poetry awakened an interest in human character and daily life.

The wars of the Roses caused a decadence of literature during the fifteenth century ; but a revival ensued, and translations from the ancient classics, as well as sonnets and love songs imitated from Italian poetry, considerably expanded the range of thought, and imparted a more elegant tone to the language. Miracle plays representing scriptural events, which had been originated soon after the introduction of

Christianity, were superseded by comedies and tragedies, and romances in verse and prose became popular.

In the sixteenth century the diffusion of knowledge by means of the printing-press, the discovery of new countries, and the spread of the Reformation, all tended to kindle imagination, and to enlarge the intellectual ideas of the nation generally. The Elizabethan dramas, culminating with those of Shakespeare, have never been excelled in their grandeur and variety, their perfect delineations of human nature, their wealth of incident, or their exuberance of wit. The poetry also of the period, whether descriptive, satirical, or humorous, bore the impress of developed power and refinement ; while the prose compositions, in almost every branch of learning, attained a depth of tone, and a classic grace of style, which have served as models to many subsequent writers. Lord Bacon rivalled his earlier namesake in his philosophical and scientific attainments, and Spenser's pastoral and allegorical poems were succeeded by those of Milton.

The civil war in the seventeenth century again

almost silenced the voice of literature, with the exception of polemical treatises, and Puritanical rule suppressed the drama. In the reaction that followed the Restoration, a new style, borrowed from the French, which was characterised by degrading coarseness and scoffing ridicule, prevailed for a time.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, which is known as the English 'Augustan' age, the poetical compositions, although perfect in metre, were deficient in passion and grace. The style of the chief prose writers, however, was simple and vigorous. In the next generation several of the noblest specimens of English writing were produced, and the poetry became more fervid and natural. Works of fiction took the place of tragedies and comedies, while history, science, and philosophy were more generally studied and popularised. The newspaper press and periodical criticism became, from this time, powerful influences in guiding public opinion, and satire the keenest weapon for assailing the vices both of the rich and poor.

The stirring incidents of the first French Revolution gave birth to an entirely new development of mental activity, which is still perceptible in the greater freedom of thought, and in the widened scope of the literature of the present century. More practical than that of any preceding age, it at the same time indicates an intellectual energy, and, excepting the effusions of sensational novelists, a moral pureness which should earn for the writers of the Victorian era, including many who are still living, an enduring fame in the estimation of posterity.





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